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New York

President: Mr. Essy ..... (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda item 34 *(continued)*

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/689)

Draft resolution (A/49/L.40)

Mr. Hurst (Antigua and Barbuda): When my Prime Minister, the Honourable Lester Bryant Bird, addressed the Assembly on 6 October 1994, he said:

> "The international community should not assume ... that the crisis in Haiti arose only from internal factors. Much of its genesis resides in the attitude of major international actors motivated by their own domestic concerns." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 20th meeting, p. 17)*

Now that the most perilous chapter of the crisis in Haiti has come to an end, another equally significant challenge faces the international community. How can we collectively help to transform the poorest State in the Western hemisphere into a viable economic success story? Will the major international actors, motivated by humane concerns and even by self-interest, faithfully pursue the effort to end poverty in Haiti? Or will their own domestic concerns prevent them from paying attention to the needs of this small and poor country?

In answer to these questions, my delegation would refer to the statement made by the representative of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on behalf of the Caribbean Community and Suriname. That statement enjoys my country's full support. My delegation would wish to bring closer attention to one of Ambassador Des Iles' remarks. The Ambassador said:

> "the international community can ill afford the consequences of an abrupt and premature disengagement from developments in Haiti. ... Haiti is now in dire need of international assistance, without which peace, political stability and sustainable social and economic development will remain unattainable goals." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 68th meeting, pp. 17 and 18)*

President Aristide has himself noted that his Government's objective is to move Haiti from misery to poverty with dignity. The breadbaskets of the wealthy States are full enough to meet the modest goals which the restored President announced from this very rostrum two months ago. Even my small nation, an indirect beneficiary of Haiti's war of independence 200 years ago, deems it necessary to give its widow's mite.

My delegation would note, however, that as a general rule developing countries have a preference for multilateral assistance over direct bilateral assistance. Bilateral assistance usually comes with many conditions attached, and its withdrawal can be threatened whenever

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the recipient State takes independent decisions that may not be in accordance with the wishes of the donor country. Hence, Haiti may surely prefer the multilateral assistance which the United Nations, the Organization of American States and their agencies could provide, believing that it can maintain its dignity as it escapes misery.

With that in mind, my delegation would welcome a periodic review of the economic situation in Haiti in order to determine the extent to which the vineyard of democracy is yielding good fruit in that Caribbean island country. We would wish for history to record that much of the genesis of Haiti's reconstruction resided in the generosity of major international actors motivated less by their own domestic concerns and more by the successful experimentation with democracy which Haiti represents.

Mr. Schaulsohn (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The subject before the General Assembly today, democracy and human rights in Haiti, has special significance for Chile. We are discussing a State in our region that is linked to our country with deep and historic bonds of friendship.

The recent return to Port-au-Prince of Haiti's Constitutional President Jean-Bertrand Aristide marks the success of the struggle of the country's present leaders and its patient people, who never yielded in their search for democracy and genuine respect for human rights.

For that reason Chile, along with the entire international community, joins in wishing President Aristide great success in coping with the difficult task of achieving the country's institutional normalization. In the same spirit we wished to contribute to some degree to the task of reconstruction by sending to Port-au-Prince a high-level Chilean mission to evaluate on the ground, together with the Haitian Government, how best to forge a cooperation that will be both useful and effective.

For Chile, as for all the countries of the region, the *coup d'état* of General Cedras was especially painful, for it meant a serious break in the process of democratization of the countries of our continent. It also meant the recurrence of flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, giving rise to situations which we thought had been overcome.

Nevertheless, we were pleased to note the unanimous condemnation that was immediately forthcoming from the international community, with joint and positive action by the Organization of American States and the United Nations. The joint initiatives of the two multilateral organizations were from the very beginning aimed at reaching a peaceful and negotiated political solution that would bring an end to the problem. However, there were many obstacles along the way, for the *de facto* government persistently refused to abide by the commitments it had undertaken at Governors Island, flouting them with impunity.

Faced with an increasingly untenable situation, the Security Council took the initiative in resolving the situation, an action we fully value for having prevented untold suffering and needless loss of innocent human life.

The great task of reconstruction has barely begun, but serious economic, social and political problems lie ahead that continue to obstruct the democratic process and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. We urge the multilateral force to create conditions that will enable early deployment of the United Nations Mission in Haiti.

That Mission, in close contact with the Haitian Government and institutions, should provide basic assistance in creating the necessary structures to initiate the process of national reconstruction without delay. We believe that at the present time both humanitarian assistance and basic aid for development will be key elements in the peace and stability the Haitian people deserve.

Along with the aforementioned, a key role in the strengthening of democracy will be the strengthening of the machinery for the protection of human rights, since these are a fundamental and irreplaceable pillar of any society that claims to be truly democratic. An important and unavoidable first step is adherence to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights. Those instruments enshrine various elements that typify the democratic system — the right to political participation in a country's government and the right of free expression, association and assembly. In other words, we can define the idea of democracy as the human right that emerges from those four elementary political rights.

We must bear in mind that the most decisive area in any country's social system is the political one, where the decision-making process in which all members of society are involved takes place. As a result, respect for those rights in the other areas of the system, be they social, economic or cultural.

In this connection the Government of Chile today reaffirms its determination to support President Aristide's efforts in this great undertaking.

At the twenty-first session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, which was held at Santiago de Chile in June 1991, we adopted a resolution entitled "Commitment to democracy". In it, the countries of the region expressed their determination to adopt a body of effective, timely and workable procedures to ensure the promotion and defence of representative democracy.

That instrument has proved to be of great significance, for, along with other measures adopted by the international community, it has played an important role in restoring institutional order to Haiti, and its implementation will help to deter possible illegal attempts to disrupt the democratic process of any country member of the Organization of American States.

The task of strengthening human rights by consolidating democracy is a challenge that faces the international community as a whole. Whatever its historical or cultural identity, every people will achieve higher levels of respect for fundamental human rights to the degree that it ensures increased democratization of its institutions, that is, to the degree that each and every individual in those societies enjoys even greater respect for his or her political rights.

We believe that in the case of Haiti there must be a generous commitment by the whole of the international community so that, in a very short time, we can realize the institutional stability that is so necessary for the rebirth of its devastated economy.

Mr. Arzoumanian (Armenia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

We have read with particular satisfaction the most recent reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Haiti, and we have studied the periodic information about the work of the multinational force there. According to that information, all the main activities of Haitian society are gradually returning to normal. We note with satisfaction and hope that the rebuilding of the country has already begun. As well as expressing our best wishes, we pledge Chile's continued support for the Haitian people in their unrelenting struggle for freedom and development.

Mr. Flores Olea (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Today the General Assembly is once again considering the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti. Fortunately, however, the context is totally different from the circumstances that prevailed last year when we adopted resolution 48/27.

The return of Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Port-au-Prince and the restoration of the legitimately elected Government have enabled the Haitian people to embark firmly on the re-establishment of democracy: something that had been achieved with such difficulty and that the military leaders responsible for the *coup* — those who abandoned power recently — with their unbounded ambitions, had tried to thwart. Fortunately, once again constitutional order has been restored to a country that was thrown into a state of upheaval.

Despite these encouraging events, we are bound to express concern about the fact that the harmonious development of the poorest people in our hemisphere is something that still has to be worked at. President Aristide's return to Port-au-Prince does not mean that Haiti's problems have been resolved once and for all. This is only the first step in the right direction. The return to legality is not an end in itself, though it is a precondition of and certainly an important step towards resolution of the immense difficulties still facing Haiti.

We must recognize that legal and social order in Haiti is in a state of ruin following long years of Duvalier dictatorship and the illegitimate military regime that emerged from the most recent *coup d'état*. The process of national reconciliation will take a very long time and will require the determined efforts of all sectors of Haitian society. Here, we welcome with approval the attitude of President Aristide, and we endorse his appeals for moderation and concord.

Once the process of stabilization in Haiti has begun, we must rebuild the country's institutions. This is undoubtedly a task that the people of Haiti will have to shoulder. After all, only they know what is best for themselves. As has been requested, the international community will take up the task of offering resolute support in this process.

For Mexico, it is very clear that only Haitians can determine their own destiny. Peace and democracy cannot be imposed. Peace is built from within, through the efforts of all sectors of society. Democracy cannot be based on external models; it is born of the will of an entire people and has to be lived day by day before it can become permanent. National reconciliation is a process

that will follow its own course — encouraged by the people of Haiti.

The United Nations has decided to maintain a presence in Haiti as a symbol of the international community's support for the Haitian people in their struggle to achieve stability. We hope that as soon as the United Nations Mission in Haiti has been deployed, a peace-keeping force will be planned and mobilized by the Organization.

We also welcome the return to Port-au-Prince of the International Civil Mission to Haiti — a vehicle for joint action by the United Nations and the Organization of American States. This close cooperation between the two Organizations has yielded fruit, and it constitutes an expression of the will of the countries of the region to help Haiti.

The international community cannot be satisfied with political success alone. Apart from the tasks of institutional reconstruction, it is necessary to support Haiti as it endeavours to build an infrastructure and to establish conditions conducive to the development of a viable, stable and secure economy that will guarantee the well-being of Haitian society.

We join in the appeal to United Nations bodies responsible for development activities and to multilateral financial institutions to devote their efforts to this task of economic reconstruction. This is a requirement if there is to be political and institutional stability. Here, international organizations — especially the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme — have an essential role to play. Of course, this does not rule out bilateral-cooperation options.

There is an arduous task before us. Haiti deserves our support if its citizens are to have a worthy life, well-being, prosperity, order and security.

Mr. Karsgaard (Canada): Just over one month ago President Aristide returned to Haiti, and a three-year twilight of brutality and repression ended. It is with considerable satisfaction that Canada joins the international community in celebrating this historic event. The Haitian people are now able to resume, with confidence, their efforts to establish a stable, peaceful and democratic society.

We pay tribute to the courage of all those in Haiti who fought to bring democracy back to their country and to the memory of those, both well-known and anonymous, who perished in the struggle. Their aspirations have prevailed.

The restoration of President Aristide is a success for the international community. The commitment and the combined efforts of individuals, groups and international organizations have been key to attaining this outcome. As a member of the Group of Friends of Haiti, Canada shares the tremendous pleasure in the realization of our common objectives.

The peaceful deployment of the multinational coalition, authorized by the United Nations under Security Council resolution 940 (1994), played a central role in the establishment of the conditions permitting the return of President Aristide. We commend the coalition's efforts and the important role it continues to play. We look forward to the early transition to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), once a stable and secure environment has been established. When deployed, UNMIH will help Haitians in constructing a stable, peaceful and democratic society.

(spoke in French)

Since President Aristide returned to Haiti, progress has been made in strengthening both democracy and respect for human rights. A new government has been formed. Parliament has resumed its functions. President Aristide has named a new Commander of the Haitian Armed Forces and efforts are under way to establish a civilian police force. We welcome President Aristide's intention to hold legislative and local elections in the near future and look forward to intensified preparations to this end.

Despite these positive developments, the challenges facing Haiti remain enormous as it works to consolidate democracy and build a new society based on full respect for human rights. The international community must remain fully engaged in assisting Haitians in this process.

A central part of the process is ensuring that the rule of law and respect for civilian authority is firmly established. The creation of a new civilian police force and the strengthening of the judicial system are two key elements. Through its bilateral assistance programme, Canada is providing significant support, both in Canada and in Haiti, in training the new police force. These

efforts are aimed at making sure that Haitians can be confident that public security officials are working for and with them rather than against them as instruments of oppression. At the same time, we are looking at ways to assist Haiti in undertaking the reforms it needs to make the judicial system work for all Haitians.

(spoke in English)

We welcome the return of the joint International Civilian Mission. Since its creation, it has played a fundamental role in highlighting human rights abuses committed under the de facto regime. In the light of the new situation, the Mission can now play a useful role not only in monitoring the human rights situation but also in helping Haitians create the right environment for, and enhance institutions aimed at, ensuring the full protection of human rights. In this regard, we fully support the Secretary-General's recommendation to modify the Mission's mandate to reflect the changed realities.

The consolidation of democracy in Haiti is directly linked to success in economic-reconstruction efforts. Considerable support is now needed to assist Haitians to rebuild an economy and a society further impoverished by three years of repression. To this end, Canada will provide over $30 million in assistance during the next six months, aimed at meeting both immediate needs and supporting long term growth. Without a prompt and sustained contribution on the part of the donor community, Haiti's fragile democracy could be jeopardized.

With the collapse of the de facto regime and the return of President Aristide, Haiti has embarked on a new path. Haitians can look to the future with hope and optimism. Although no one denies the difficulties that lie ahead, the signs so far are encouraging. We fully support President Aristide's call for national reconciliation and cooperation. We must all work to ensure that Haitians can realize this objective, leave behind forever the dark episode they have endured, and fulfil their aspirations to a better future.

Mr. Rangel Vargas (Venezuela) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: There is an extraordinary difference between the pessimistic tone of the debate on this subject at the last session of the General Assembly and the optimism with which we are taking it up today. Democratic institutions have been restored in Haiti and President Jean-Bertrand Aristide has resumed his functions. Little time has passed since, on 15 October last, the legitimate President returned to power, but there was a long time indeed when the Haitian people were deprived of the right to live in freedom: a little more than three years has passed since September 1991.

For Haiti, and especially for the Haitian people, another page of its tragic history has been turned — a page full of pain, hardship and hunger. A new stage has begun which, though hopeful, is as difficult as the stage experienced by many other countries in the developing world that seem to have been abandoned to their fate or have been forced to live with their misfortunes. All the members of the international community bear a certain responsibility *vis-à-vis* Haiti's future, its people and democracy.

The first steps towards national reconciliation have been taken. We are confident that, with every passing day, dialogue, pluralism and the peaceful coexistence of all sectors of the Haitian people will be consolidated, so that democracy in Haiti will become strong, permanent and lasting. This is one of the greatest and most immediate challenges facing President Aristide. It includes, as a matter of priority, the creation of a new police force, the reorganizations and reduction of the military forces and the reform of the judicial system.

With the departure of the military leaders responsible for the coup and the restoration of the legitimate authorities, Haiti has entered a political and institutional transition period. We hope that this will not be a long period. It should involve, among other things, the restoration of complete sovereignty and independence and of all the Haitian people's civil and political rights. In other words, Venezuela considers that over the very short term, together with measures adopted to strengthen democracy, steps must be taken to withdraw the so-called multinational force and replace it by the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH).

This is a fundamental step, which must be aimed at creating stability for Haitian democracy and designed to facilitate a broad programme of recovery and reconstruction in Haiti. In this context, if we wish to create a democracy with a future we must set an electoral timetable and make the preparations for the forthcoming legislative elections, which were to have been held on 17 December next but for which, we understand, a new date will have to be set owing to circumstances that have arisen.

We are confident that the United Nations, in consultation with the Organization of American States,

will accelerate the measures needed to ensure the early holding of parliamentary elections, which must be free and transparent.

During this period of political and institutional transition, whose purpose is to consolidate democracy as a system of government and to strengthen the institutions guaranteeing full respect for the rights of the Haitian people, it is also necessary to rebuild a State based on the rule of law, reform the judicial power and ensure law and order. The United Nations must also commit itself to this objective and heed President Aristide's statement to this Assembly on 4 October that:

> "Setting up a State based on the rule of law also implies reconciliation between Haitians .... The administration of real justice will free us from the vicious circle of violence and vengeance." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 17th meeting, p. 5)*

Let us all help to build a new tomorrow, with justice, for the Haitian people.

Haiti has deserved a life of dignity ever since 1802. Economic plundering and deforestation, together with population growth, have made Haiti one of the poorest countries in the world. The past three years of crisis have aggravated its problems of poverty and hardship, typical of underdevelopment, which have led to outbreaks of violence and political divisions in many countries of the third world. We must therefore urgently tackle this other side of Haitian reality if we truly wish to help strengthen its democracy. Consequently, once the political and economic crisis caused by the military putschists has been resolved, it will be necessary to devise an intense programme of economic and social reconstruction.

The situation in Haiti could not be any worse, as President Aristide made clear to us in his address to the Assembly. Speaking of the three years of de facto government, he said:

> "The debt ceiling has been raised twice. Inflation is estimated at 60 per cent. Our national currency, the *gourde*, has been devalued by 300 per cent relative to the dollar. Public finances are in bankruptcy and the public treasury has recorded a $100 million loss for the fiscal years 1992-1994" *(ibid., p. 13)*

These few figures, given as recently as 4 October, reflect a tragic reality. The picture becomes even darker if we take account of data on Haiti's extreme poverty, illiteracy, lack of medical care, unemployment, deforestation and the destruction of its irrigation systems.

Venezuela believes that while taking action to achieve the goals of strengthening and stabilizing democracy in Haiti the United Nations must devise as a matter of priority, with the help of the Organization of American States and the cooperative institutions of both organizations, a properly coordinated emergency economic and social recovery programme to help rebuild Haiti. The United Nations must coordinate this programme with the Haitian authorities at various levels, as it has done in the past in other countries facing emergency situations. It must endeavour not only to promote the purchase of Haitian products, but also to improve Haiti's terms of trade.

In the area of human rights, once democratic legality and the rule of law have been restored, without prejudice to the climate of peace or to the process of national reconstruction already begun, three appear to be essential.

First, there is a need to restore all the political and civil rights of the Haitian people by supporting the executive power, the legislative power and the judicial power, while respecting the Constitution and the laws that guarantee human rights, and to encourage the creation of new legal instruments that will promote and protect fundamental freedoms.

Secondly, the renewed judicial power of Haiti must initiate the necessary investigations — public, non-discriminatory and transparent — to find and try the perpetrators of the serious human rights violations that occurred during the three years of the de facto government. Practical and fair ways must also be found to compensate the many victims and their families.

Thirdly, the new Haitian police and the reorganized military forces must commit themselves to respect democracy and the civil authority and to guarantee a genuine climate of reconciliation, in which respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms will form an essential part of the instruction in police academies and military institutions.

Venezuela believes that the United Nations and the Organization of American States can make an invaluable contribution to the attainment of these goals, which, we are certain, are shared by the Government of President

Aristide, by preparing a plan to create and strengthen Haitian institutions responsible for promoting, supervising and ensuring respect for human rights, as well as to facilitate Haiti's accession to all international instruments protecting fundamental freedoms.

Venezuela is convinced that the sister republic of Haiti can have a promising future; that democracy in Haiti will be consolidated, as a source of pride to its people and as an example to the world; and that the international community will make whatever contributions are necessary. We affirm that we are committed to these objectives and that Haiti can count on our support and cooperation. The Government of Venezuela has already begun this process by unilaterally suspending the sanctions that we had imposed following the *coup d'état* and by deciding to resume shipments of oil to Haiti, within the framework of the San José agreement, which, with Mexico, we are developing, to the benefit of a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries.

Mr. Cárdenas (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Once again we are meeting to consider "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti". On past occasions when our Assembly has tackled this subject, we have usually hoped for an improvement; we have hoped for the restoration, promotion and protection of human rights in Haiti, and for democracy. Year after year, however, the situation has deteriorated, apparently inexorably.

Today, our hopes, and the confidence that the international community had placed in the possibility of resolving the Haitian crisis, have been restored. President Aristide, who had been constitutionally elected by the majority of the Haitian people, was able to return to Haiti recently — thanks to the efforts of the multinational force speedily and peacefully deployed in that brotherly country under the Charter, with a mandate to represent the international community. With President Aristide's return we can now say with certainty that the tiny light we saw at the end of the tunnel a little more than two months ago has intensified and is now beginning to shine on Haiti's human rights situation and democratization process.

Haiti's constitutional consolidation must involve the dismantling of the repressive military, police and "attaché" structure. The task of the multilateral force and the future task of the United Nations Mission in Haiti includes disarming those who collaborated in constant, massive violations of human rights. A priority in training programmes for the police and the armed forces is developing full respect for and promotion and full protection of human rights.

There have been encouraging developments in the situation in Haiti, which is moving towards normality. This would have been impossible without the joint efforts of the participants in this historic process. I recall here the efforts and courage, indeed the self-sacrifice, of the members of the OAS/United Nations International Civilian Mission to Haiti (MICIVIH) as they carried out their mandate in circumstances that were often difficult. The Mission has our full support, and we believe it still has an important role to play in normalization and consolidation of the democratic process, respect for human rights and the prevalence of fundamental freedoms in Haitian society. While the process of consolidating democracy in Haiti continues, the Argentine Republic reiterates its commitment to that process, in which it will continue to be an active participant.

A great deal remains to be done. But today the people of Haiti, their sovereignty now in their hands, have chosen their own path.

Mr. Henze (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union, Austria and Sweden.

The European Union, Austria and Sweden warmly welcome the peaceful return to power in Haiti of the constitutional Government under the democratically elected President, Mr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide on 15 October of this year. The return of President Aristide followed the decision of the illegal military rulers, after long refusing to comply with their obligations under the Governors Island Agreement and ignoring relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, finally to step down without military confrontation. This was made possible by the determined action of the international community throughout the crisis and, ultimately, by the efforts of the multinational force. The European Union, Austria and Sweden commend the countries that have contributed to the multinational force, in particular the United States, for their role in carrying out the international community's goals as laid out in Security Council resolution 940 (1994).

The European Union, Austria and Sweden pay tribute to the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives, Mr. Dante Caputo and Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, to solve the political crisis in Haiti. The Secretary-General's recent visit to Haiti, on 15 November, demonstrated his commitment to working for a positive outcome in Haiti. We also welcome his

latest reports, of 21 November 1994 and 23 November 1994.

We would also like to pay tribute to the efforts of the Organization of American States (OAS) and of the Friends of the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the question of Haiti to restore the democratic process in Haiti. The International Civilian Mission (MICIVIH) jointly undertaken by the United Nations and the OAS underlines the commitment of the OAS to solving Haiti's grave problems.

Several States members of the European Union are actively participating in the efforts of the multinational force to establish a secure and stable environment. We hope that these efforts will soon permit the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) fully to deploy under the terms of Security Council resolution 940 (1994) and to begin its extensive programme of assistance. We welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation that the UNMIH advance team be strengthened in order to facilitate the transition from the multinational force to UNMIH.

The European Union, Austria and Sweden support the efforts by the Government of Haiti to establish an environment conducive to the organization of free and fair legislative elections, to be monitored by the United Nations in cooperation with the OAS. We are prepared to assist the Government in organizing those elections.

The restoration of the constitutional order, the return of the legitimate authorities and the return of the International Civilian Mission open the way for improving the human rights situation. In this respect we welcome the recommendation by the Secretary-General, reflected in draft resolution A/49/L.40, to broaden the responsibilities of MICIVIH in order to contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions. The European Union, Austria and Sweden note with satisfaction that there has been substantial progress in the field of human rights since the departure of the military regime that for so long had inflicted tremendous suffering on the people of Haiti. We express our willingness to assist the new Government in its task.

The democratic Government of Haiti now faces the difficult tasks of working for national reconciliation and of rebuilding a nation devastated by abuses by its military rulers. We are greatly encouraged by President Aristide's message of reconciliation before the General Assembly on 4 October this year and by the policies he has initiated since his return.

In last year's General Assembly resolution 48/27 A, we pledged that the international community would increase its technical, economic and financial cooperation with Haiti once constitutional order had been established and that it would strengthen the institutions called upon to dispense justice and guarantee democracy, political stability and economic development. In line with that commitment, the European Union, in accordance with Security Council resolution 944 (1994) of 29 September 1994, and as soon as President Aristide returned to the country, lifted the sanctions it had imposed against Haiti.

The European Union, Austria and Sweden will support the new Government of Concord headed by Prime Minister Smarck Michel in its efforts at reconstruction and national reconciliation. To that end, the European Union has pledged emergency aid programmes worth 12 million ECU and additional projects worth 8 million ECU. For reconstruction projects, the European Development Bank will grant further loans of 120 million ECU. In addition, some member States are granting emergency assistance and will also contribute bilaterally to Haiti's reconstruction. Furthermore, States members of the European Union are granting emergency assistance in the wake of tropical storm "Gordon", which recently struck Haiti. We extend our deepest sympathy to the families of those who lost their lives in this disaster.

We hope that the new Government of Concord, with the support of the international community, will take resolute and decisive steps to restore democracy and promote an environment of stability, reconciliation and the rule of law.

The democratic Government of Haiti faces numerous problems and obstacles in the now resumed process of democratization. The European Union, Austria and Sweden will assist the Government in its efforts to overcome these problems. It is in that spirit that the European Union has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/49/L.40, entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti".

Mr. Gelber (United States of America): On behalf of my Government, I am pleased to note the dramatic improvement in the human rights climate in Haiti since the deployment of the multinational force in Haiti, on 19 September 1994. Because of the efforts of the multinational force, authorized by the Security Council in resolution 940 (1994) of 31 July 1994, Haiti today stands

at the threshold of a new beginning, a democratic future in which human rights can and will be respected. I must note the crucial role played by the United States, as the leading member of the multinational force in Haiti, in restoring the democratically elected President of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to office on 15 October 1994.

A recent assessment by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights described the situation as one where, today, the people of Haiti are no longer afraid to venture out at night, freedom of expression is flourishing and, most significant, instances of arbitrary arrest, torture, cruelty and extrajudicial killings have ceased.

In noting this improvement, I welcome the opportunity to congratulate the 31 Member States which are participating in the multinational force for their outstanding contribution in restoring democracy to Haiti. The role of the multinational force in improving the human rights situation in Haiti has been pivotal. In addition to approximately 10,000 United States troops currently in Haiti, other members of the multinational force coalition account for nearly 1,500 additional personnel. Among these personnel are forces from Bangladesh, Guatemala and the Caribbean Community, including Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago. Other Members which are part of the multinational force are Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Israel, Jordan, Nepal, the Netherlands, Norway, Panama, the Philippines, Poland and the United Kingdom.

On behalf of the Government of the United States, I thank all members of the multinational force for what they have done for the people of Haiti. Along with the international community, we look forward to the day when the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) will carry out its duties in Haiti with the same success as that enjoyed by the multinational force.

My Government would like to pay special tribute to President Aristide for his calls for national reconciliation in Haiti. President Aristide's efforts in this regard and the joining in this national rejuvenation by all sectors of Haitian society are fundamental and welcome developments. We also take this opportunity to congratulate Prime Minister Michel and his Government as they undertake the difficult task of rebuilding the Haitian political system. The efforts by President Aristide and Prime Minister Michel to promote national reconciliation will be the hinge upon which will turn long-term democracy, peace and prosperity for the people of Haiti.

Much work remains to be done to consolidate permanent respect for human rights. There are numerous reports that the *chefs de section*, remnants of the Cedras regime, continue to control small remote rural pockets of the country. The resolution before this Assembly today adds the voice of the international community to those concerned about Haitian democracy and human rights.

We note specifically the role of the joint United Nations/Organization of American States International Civilian Mission (MICIVIH), whose mandate was extended by this Assembly under resolution 48/278 on 8 July 1994, as a necessary player for the foreseeable future to steady the human rights situation in the long term. We can point with pride to the efforts of the MICIVIH to carry out its mandate in Haiti under the most difficult of circumstances during the rule of the de facto authorities. We express special thanks to the Executive Director of MICIVIH, Mr. Colin Granderson, and his staff for their efforts and their dedication to the cause of Haitian human rights. My Government encourages the quickest possible return of MICIVIH to full strength so that it may effectively promote human rights for all in Haiti.

The long-term national reconciliation and the promotion of human rights in Haiti require valiant efforts by all Haitian political actors to re-establish political dialogue. The political actors in Haiti must know that the international community stands in vigilant watch and is prepared to work with them to ensure that democracy and human rights flourish as fundamental elements of national reconciliation.

We must also stress the need for a functional and fair system of justice in Haiti. Legislation which will separate the police and the military has been put forth. In addition, the multinational force has undertaken the creation of a training programme for an interim police force in Haiti. This programme is an important first step in fostering an entirely new kind of police system in Haiti. Trainers from Canada, France and the United States are teaching Haitians that the public safety role of the police is based on responsibility to the people and to the law.

As part of this programme, over 800 international police monitors from 20 nations are working throughout much of Haiti to make sure that the work of the interim

police force is acceptable under international human rights standards. This programme, which began under a bilateral agreement between the United States and the Aristide government, will continue under UNMIH. The next step in this programme is even more important. In January, classes will begin to train a professional corps of civilian police who will answer to the civilian leadership of the Government in support of the Constitution and laws of Haiti.

The United States looks forward to the holding of free and fair legislative elections in Haiti at the earliest possible date. Our hope is that these elections will be a definitive moment in efforts, in the words of President Aristide, to reconcile Haitians with Haiti. The United Nations Electoral Assistance Division has already begun efforts to plan for elections and has opened an office in Port-au-Prince. The United States itself is providing $11.3 million towards civic and voter education, the training of poll workers and political party poll watchers, transportation and logistics. This assistance is being coordinated with local Haitian non-governmental organizations. We look forward to Prime Minister Michel's naming of a provisional electoral council at the earliest possible date.

It is right and proper for the international community, embodied in this Assembly, to do its utmost to help the people of Haiti in their new beginning as citizens of a country which has newly returned to the democratic fold.

The President returned to the Chair.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has designed, in close consultation with the constitutional Government of Haiti, a bilateral assistance programme of $185 million to be carried out over the next 12 months. This programme includes $57.2 million in humanitarian assistance, which will provide for medical care and feeding programmes for approximately two million Haitians. The programme also includes $40 million for assistance for institutions of government, including with elections and the justice system, as I have just detailed. Finally, USAID's programme will devote $87 million to efforts at economic recovery. This will include foreign exchange assistance in paying arrears to international financial institutions and support for agriculture, education, environment and the private sector.

Finally, on behalf of my Government, I must commend the diligence over the last three years of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States in bringing about a resolution of the Haitian crisis. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Dante Caputo, the former Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and a former President of the General Assembly, for his tireless efforts. As we look ahead in Haiti, we express our thanks for the efforts of Mr. Brahimi, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as he begins his duties in Haiti. My Government places great confidence in his ability to coordinate efforts of the United Nations as we approach the transition from the multinational force to the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH).

My Government sees the cooperation between the United Nations and the multinational force in Haiti as nothing less than a model for future cooperation in international crises. Much work remains to be done in Haiti and there is much that could still frustrate the efforts of the international community to assist Haiti in its rebuilding and restoration. However, let us not ignore the real progress which has been made. Let us only ask that we continue to put the best of ourselves into this worthwhile effort.

In adopting this draft resolution, the United Nations General Assembly will go on record as being at one with the aspirations of the people of Haiti. My Government joins in full support of the international community's efforts to assist the Haitian people as they rebuild their ravaged nation and as they pursue with dignity their quest for human rights and full democracy.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform delegations that in order to allow the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the Fifth Committee to review the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/49/L.40, action on the draft resolution will be taken at a later date to be announced in the *Journal*.

Agenda item 36

Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/584)

Draft resolution (A/49/L.38)

The President: *(interpretation from French)*: I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of

the Comoros, His Excellency Mr. Said Mohamed Sagaf, to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.38.

Mr. Sagaf (Comoros) *(interpretation from French)*: Agenda item 36, entitled "Question of the Comorian island of Mayotte" provides me with the welcome opportunity to address the General Assembly for a second time. Allow me, Sir, to reiterate the brotherly congratulations of the Government and the people of the Comoros on your unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

I am very pleased to learn that, under your presidency, the work of the General Assembly is proceeding smoothly and that, thanks to your wisdom, a number of important decisions have already been adopted by consensus. Your wealth of experience in the field of international relations and the fundamental principles that guide Ivory Coast's diplomacy, in which you are playing an important role, are undoubtedly the reasons behind the successful outcome of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly that is all but assured.

As the years and sessions have passed, the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte has become a classic agenda item. Unfortunately, it is about to beat the endurance record for the item that has remained longest on the agenda of the General Assembly. Indeed, when this year's draft resolution (A/49/L.38) is adopted, it will become the nineteenth resolution of the Assembly on the subject. The spirit and the letter of the draft resolution before us have remained unchanged for 19 years since the political and legal ramifications of the dispute between my country and France have not changed because France has refused to engage in dialogue.

Today, I would like to spare the Assembly an account of the background of the dispute, which arose as a result of a misinterpretation by France of the right of peoples to self determination and the sacrosanct principles of territorial integrity and the inviolability of frontiers inherited from the colonial period.

On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations — which the people and the Government of the Comoros intend to commemorate emphatically — and after the upheavals that led to the demise of ideological blocs and allowed the winds of democracy to reach various parts of the world, at home we are wondering about the balkanization of our national territory. We also wonder whether the end of the cold war should not have been a sufficiently dynamic event to put an end to the hegemonistic plans of certain Powers.

The fact that the Comorian island of Mayotte has been separated from its three sister islands is a major setback in this southern region of the Indian Ocean. It impedes the advent of peace in this part of the world which our Organization has for many decades now proclaimed a denuclearized zone. The Government and the people of the Comoros remain concerned that this question remains unsettled and that our Organization has been unable to adopt any measure to bring France to accept negotiation.

I need hardly recall that since 1975 the various authorities in the Comoros have abided by the guiding principles of the Charter of the United Nations that advocate dialogue as the only way to resolve disputes.

Even more recently, His Excellency Mr. Said Mohamed Djohar, President of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, suggested to His Excellency Mr. François Mitterrand, President of the French Republic, who was on an official visit to the Comoros in June 1990, the initiation of a tripartite negotiation — in other words, he suggested that the political leaders of the Comorian island of Mayotte be involved in the negotiations between France and the Comoros on this matter.

But France's response to these Comorian initiatives, to the actions taken by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on the Comorian island of Mayotte, presided over by Gabon, to the recommendations of the League of Arab States, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, has been an unbending refusal, in contempt of modern international law. Even worse, since 1975 successive French Governments have undertaken in Mayotte a policy of settlement and socio-economic development aimed at cutting all ties — historic, linguistic and economic — which have always been the basis of the archipelago's unity.

In Mayotte the non-Comorian kind of welcome extended to the inhabitants of the other three islands is a daily reminder that some 200 kilometres from our capital, Moroni, other laws and other regulations govern the lives of our compatriots. The development of port and airport infrastructures financed by non-French corporations gives Mayotte a regional and subregional

status, but its real status is that of a territorial community. That is the subject of greatest concern to the States of the subregion.

We became even more concerned when we heard the statement made in Mayotte on Thursday, 24 November 1994 by the present Prime Minister of France, His Excellency Mr. Edouard Balladur. He said, *inter alia*, that the inhabitants of Mayotte would be consulted on their final status before the year 2000. He added:

> "Many immigrants, who entered Mahoran territory legally, are staying longer than they should. I have therefore decided to reintroduce the requirement that Comorian citizens must have a visa to enter the territory of the French community of Mayotte. This measure should in no way be taken as showing hostility to the Republic of Comoros."

The Assembly can certainly imagine how upset and disappointed we were by that statement. How many referendums does France intend to hold to justify the legitimacy of its presence in the Comorian island of Mayotte? Such an initiative, were it to be acted upon, would create confusion by the use of a legalism that is contrary to General Assembly resolution 1514 (XV), which states:

> "Any attempt aimed at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations." *(resolution 1514 (XV), para. 6)*

General Assembly resolution 3385 (XXX), of 12 November 1975, on the admission of the Comoros to the United Nations, confirms this point. In it, the Assembly reaffirmed

> "the necessity of respecting the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoro Archipelago, composed of the islands of Anjouan, Grande-Comore, Mayotte and Mohéli". *(resolution 3385 (XXX), third preambular paragraph)*

It is clear from those General Assembly resolutions that the referendum on self-determination held on 22 December 1974 is the sole valid sounding of public opinion applicable to the Comoros Archipelago. To require an entry visa to Mayotte for Comorians from the other three islands is nothing more nor less than an act of hostility against my country. That decision is an innovation that essentially puts an end to the free flow of goods and persons among the four islands of the archipelago.

By this measure the French Prime Minister has laid bare to the world France's true intentions in Mayotte. The French Head of Government thus places himself in opposition to what His Excellency Mr. François Mitterrand, President of the French Republic, said during his official visit to the Comoros. Mr. Mitterrand, quite unlike Mr. Balladur, encouraged exchanges between the islands. The General Assembly must react strongly in order to counter the declared intentions of France, which, instead of accepting the hand stretched out by the Comoros, is accentuating our differences.

Aware of its weaknesses and what is at stake with respect to the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte, the people of Comoros has since 1975 been turning to the States represented here, which make up the world community.

For us Comorians the reintegration of the Comorian island of Mayotte into the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros is a matter of both honour and dignity. Our determination to achieve it is rooted in the very fabric of our common culture, race, religion, geography, history, economy and language. The Comorian people has also learned from modern history that each people, small or large, rich or poor, is born free and sovereign.

The Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros is a small, least-developed, island State and therefore has to wage a twofold struggle: for economic survival and for the recovery of its territorial integrity. It can therefore be understood why we place all our hopes in the United Nations, which, in the field of self-determination, has left an indelible mark on the world history of the past 50 years. My country is firmly wedded to the noble ideals and principles in the Charter of San Francisco, which have enabled our Organization to contribute to bringing about peace, the development of friendly relations and cooperation between peoples, and the security of States.

With the passing of time, the Organization has become an instrument regulating relations between the various components of the international community. The merit of this world forum is that it turns unequal Powers into equal Powers, even if this equality is somewhat diminished by the right of veto enjoyed by certain Powers.

The Agenda for Peace submitted by the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to whom we wish to pay a warm tribute for his dedication to serving mankind's well-being of humanity, reminds us that prevention is the best way to guarantee international peace and security.

I have spoken from my heart but without losing sight of reason, because it is reason that imposes on us our unflagging attachment to a part of our national territory. I express the sincere wish of His Excellency Mr. Said Mohamed Djohar, President of the Federal Islamic Republic of the Comoros, and the Government and people of the Comoros that under your presidency, Sir, the General Assembly will adopt a decision that responds to our legitimate claim. May the Assembly speak with one voice to France, so that dialogue can begin tomorrow between France and our brothers in Mayotte on the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte.

I cannot conclude without expressing the profound gratitude of the Comorian Government and people to the States sponsors of the draft resolution in document A/49/L.38 on the question of the Comorian island of Mayotte, as well as to the Republic of Uganda, which has just joined the list of sponsors. I also wish to thank in advance those who have traditionally supported us and our just cause. We would ask those who normally abstain — not because they are opposed to the right of peoples to self-determination or to restoring the Comorian island of Mayotte to the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, but rather because this particular case is unusual and complex — to give us their positive vote.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.38.

The representative of France has asked to speak in explanation of vote before the vote. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Mérimée (France) (*interpretation from French*): France regrets that the question of the island of Mayotte, a territory under French sovereignty, is again being considered by the General Assembly. My country cannot but vote against the draft resolution before us on this agenda item.

Nevertheless, my delegation listened very attentively to the statement just made on this question. The previous speaker hopes that a just and lasting solution will be found, and France shares that position. We have committed ourselves actively to seeking a satisfactory solution to the problem of Mayotte. In that spirit, France has frequently declared its readiness to accept the conditions for a settlement of this matter in conformity with international law and its own national laws.

Such a solution should above all respect the will of the population involved. In this connection, the Mahoran population voted freely and democratically in favour of maintaining the territory of Mayotte within the French Republic. The atmosphere of confidence between the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros and the French Government is allowing constructive dialogue to be pursued. This dialogue is based on the close links of friendship and cooperation between our two countries. We are convinced that such cooperation, pursued with an unwavering desire for conciliation, appeasement and a spirit of openness, will, despite the difficulties, allow progress to be made in our joint efforts to find an equitable solution. France, for its part, will spare no effort in that respect.

I wish to add a word about my Government's decision to begin issuing visas to Comorian nationals. The reason for this is that illegal immigration of Comorian nationals to the island of Mayotte has assumed unprecedented proportions. In the first six months of 1994, the total number of immigrants was higher than that for all of 1993. This migration is increasing. This decision will in no way jeopardize the excellent relations between the Comoros and France. As a matter of fact, our embassy in Moroni has received instructions to permit the new procedures in no way to impede normal relations between Mayotte and the Comoros.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.39.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador,

Ethiopia, Finland, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: France, Monaco

Abstaining: Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Vanuatu

The draft resolution was adopted by 87 votes to 2, with 38 abstentions (resolution 49/18).*

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 36?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 42

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/489 and Corr.1)

Notes by the Secretary-General (A/49/59, A/49/116, A/49/281, A/49/585)

Draft resolution A/49/L.35)

The President (*interpretation from French*): In connection with the report of the Secretary-General in document A/49/489 and Corr.1, I should like to inform delegations that, in paragraph 4, the first four document numbers that are still missing should read A/49/487, A/49/562, A/49/397 and A/49/534 respectively; and in paragraph 15, the missing document number should read A/49/534. I should also like members to note that the last phrase of paragraph 4 of the report is replaced by paragraph 1 (b) of the corrigendum.

The notes by the Secretary-General transmitting the reports of the Director of the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador are contained in documents A/49/59, A/49/116, A/49/281 and A/49/585.

I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of Costa Rica, His Excellency Mr. Fernando Naranjo Villalobos, to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.35.

Mr. Naranjo Villalobos (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to address the General Assembly, on behalf of Costa Rica and the sister countries of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, under agenda item 42, "The situation in Central America: Procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development".

We are approaching the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. In this half century, and especially in recent years, the world has greatly changed, and the Organization has changed as well.

Central America, the turbulent and volcanic midsection of the Western hemisphere, has also greatly changed. The six countries of Central America were among the founders of the United Nations. In those days several Central American countries were struggling to overthrow oppressive regimes or to eradicate their consequences. However, the true conquest of democracy in all the countries of the region has occurred only recently, thanks to the process begun at Esquipulas.

Through a series of negotiations initiated by the Central American countries, and in which the United Nations played a significant role, Central America has managed to build effective democracy and a lasting

peace. The war and widespread violence that had afflicted some of the countries in the isthmus were brought to an end thanks to a real process of national reconciliation. Respect for human rights was strengthened and the process of regional integration was renewed.

Central America moved from war to peace. But Central Americans are well aware that peace, if understood merely as the absence of war, cannot be consolidated in our region unless we have the social and economic conditions appropriate for our peoples and unless we can ensure the well-being of present and future generations within a framework of freedom and justice. To that end, in 1994 Central America took up the challenge of moving towards a new model of development.

In August of 1994 the Presidents of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, with the Prime Minister of Belize present, held their fifteenth regular meeting in the Costa Rican town of Guacimo. On that occasion the Central American leaders, while ratifying their commitment to democracy, laid down a new course for the region, which led to an alliance for sustainable development.

That Central American initiative is comprehensive in nature. Its aim is to overcome critical poverty by investing in the social sector; to promote respect for the environment and preservation of the region's natural heritage, while creating equitable economic growth and genuine opportunities for the most vulnerable groups in society. It also entails a moral struggle for honesty in public life and dedication in the exercise of power.

With a view to avoiding the rhetorical exercises that in the past had led to the loss of so many resources and so much time for the Central American countries, at Guacimo the Presidents also adopted a programme of concrete action with precise goals and timetables.

On 12 October 1994, while attending another of their gatherings, the Presidents of the Republics of the isthmus met at Managua, Nicaragua, to sign an Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America.

The Alliance for Sustainable Development, an initiative with short-, medium- and long-term policies, programmes and actions, marks a change in the strategy for development — a change in individual and collective attitudes and changes in local, national and regional policies towards the political, economic, social, cultural and environmental sustainability of Central American societies, all in keeping with Agenda 21.

This effort is not designed to replace existing machinery for integration but to complement it, strengthen it and provide it with guidelines that will make sustainable development the central strategy and policy of our countries and of the region as a whole.

The sustainable development to which Central America aspires can be achieved only within the framework of an authentic, pluralist and participatory democracy as the basis of human existence. We have agreed to incorporate it more and more directly into civil society in our region and to bring our peoples into the decision-making process in recognition of the important role such a process can play in the consolidation of democracy.

The sustainable development to which Central America aspires can be achieved only if it involves basic economic development rooted in freedom, dignity, justice, efficiency and the equitable access of our products to the international market-place. In other historical periods Central America experienced economic growth without necessarily improving the living standards of more than just a few. Today our endeavour is different. We do not want an increase in figures but an increase in the well-being of the largest possible number of people.

The sustainable development to which Central America aspires can be achieved only through the rational management of the region's natural resources and an improvement in the quality of the environment. Here, the Presidents of Central America at the Managua Summit signed 23 specific commitments with regard to natural resources, all aimed at protecting our heritage and putting a stop to its irrational exploitation, combating pollution and making concrete efforts to preserve the environment.

Mr. Yassin (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Linked by ideals of social responsibility, on 24 and 25 October at Tegucigalpa our countries' leaders participated in an International Conference on Peace and Development in Central America. There, comprehensively and with all transparency, they laid down new regional priorities with the donor community and organized civil society.

At the Tegucigalpa meeting important commitments were made in the political, economic, social, cultural and integrational fields, complementing the efforts begun at Managua with the signature of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America.

At Tegucigalpa new guidelines were laid down to strengthen democracy and regional security. Priority areas were established for action in the economic, social and cultural fields.

Central America as a whole is committed to making decisive efforts for its future. The success of those efforts will determine the degree of well-being and prosperity of our peoples and their future generations.

We believe that the success of this undertaking is in the interest not only of the nations of Central America. As the tragic events of the past decade have shown, Central American peace and stability are important factors for our neighbours in North and South America and in the Caribbean. However, above all, we believe that the tangible and positive results of Central America's efforts can serve as a model to other small and poor countries in the hemisphere or in other parts of the world that are finding in sustainable development a viable option when undertaking new courses of action.

We realize that our efforts are modest in terms of magnitude because the dimensions and resources of Central America are themselves modest. But we are confident that this will make it easier for us to achieve our objectives and that our experience can serve as an inspiration to other developing nations.

If Central America manages to achieve its objectives, and if we Central Americans can make our Alliance for Sustainable Development effective, nothing would make us happier than to know that other countries with similar problems were finding solutions based on the experience of our region.

The international community made a decisive contribution to the process of bringing peace and democracy to Central America. Various States and State organizations, as well as numerous non-governmental organizations, enthusiastically supported our peace negotiations and provided moral and material support for the process of demobilizing and repatriating refugees and displaced persons and dealing with other aspects of this vast undertaking.

The Central America that won democracy and peace is here today to express its hope that the international community will continue to support the sustainable development of the region, as it has done for the past decade. Without this support, there will be only fragile peace and democracy in Central America.

To forge ahead with the Alliance for Sustainable Development, the Central America of peace and democracy requires international cooperation. We need programmes and projects that will make it possible to fulfil our commitments in the fields of social and economic progress and the environment and our commitments to present, and especially to future, generations. In particular, we are concerned at the fact that the sums allocated to various development programmes have been reduced and that funds designated for the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America are exhausted.

The countries of Central America are very grateful for the concern shown by the United Nations and its agencies in the cause of regional peace and democracy. We appeal to other bodies in the system, especially the United Nations Development Programme, to give consideration, within the framework of the new strategy for sustainable development, to providing the resources necessary for the establishment of new, updated regional programmes. At the same time, we Central Americans make a fraternal appeal to the States Members of the United Nations to respond, individually or collectively, to this new Central American undertaking by cooperating with us in our efforts to turn our objectives into fruitful results.

The draft resolution that the six countries of Central America have introduced for the General Assembly's consideration is entitled "The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development". It sets forth the steps that have been taken by Central America as we move towards sustainable development. It reflects our countries' main aspirations with regard to the role that we are convinced the international community — in particular, the United Nations — can play in this new Central American undertaking. We are confident that the will of the General Assembly will concur, in spirit and in letter, with the draft resolution.

Central America wants freedom and peace, and in a historically brief period we triumphed in our fight for

these things. Today, Central America faces a new challenge: sustainable development. Whether we gain a new and even finer victory will depend on the will and determination of Central Americans and on the support for our efforts that we find in the international community.

The *Popol Vuh* is a sacred book of the Quiches — one of the richest pre-Colombian cultures in Central America — whose elders, it is said, prayed in these words many centuries ago:

"Oh, heaven's heart, heart of the Earth!

Bring back your glory and your riches.

Give your children life and well-being."

Today, in this Organization, which is the heart of the Earth, and knowing that God does help those who help themselves, Central America repeats that old prayer in faith and hope.

The President: I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on this item be closed in half an hour.

If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees to that proposal.

It was so decided.

The President: I request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The Government of Mexico has followed with special attention the positive developments that have taken place in Central America. The determination of the Governments and peoples of the region to strengthen their institutions has been a source of special encouragement. This year, in four of the countries of the isthmus — Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador and Panama — the Presidents of new Governments have been installed, thanks to the freely expressed will of their societies. We welcome the significant contribution that these events have made to the consolidation of peace in the region.

It is encouraging to witness the progress towards peace in Guatemala. The Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (UNRG) continue to make significant efforts to bring peace to their country. The agreements on human rights, the timetable for negotiations concerning the relocation of populations uprooted as a result of armed confrontation, and the establishment of a commission to shed light, historically, on the violations of human rights and other acts of violence that have caused great suffering among the Guatemalan people are all evidence of the determination of both sides to resolve their differences by negotiation — is the only means of securing a firm and lasting peace.

The international community is conscious of the efforts being made by Guatemalans. Last September the General Assembly, in accordance with the recommendation of the Secretary-General and the request of the two parties, authorized the creation of the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala (MINUGUA). This Mission has been established and has begun its work.

At this stage of the peace process in Guatemala it is important that the parties and Guatemalan society at large realize that progress in the negotiations will be possible only through constructive *rapprochement*.

There must be peace if the country is to solve its economic and social problems. Hence, as did the Group of Friends in the Guatemalan peace process, we urge the Guatemalan Government and the URNG to renew their unequivocal commitment to achieving a firm and lasting peace agreement, as envisaged in the Framework Agreement signed in January of this year.

Important progress has been made in El Salvador, confirming the peace process in that country as proof of the political possibilities that open up when the parties have the will, and as an indication of the successful result of international support for the efforts of the Salvadorian people. Through the United Nations, the international community is fully committed to continued support for the parties concerned in El Salvador in building a definitive and lasting peace. The Security Council's recent decision to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) for one last period, to 30 April next year, is proof of this. We also await with interest the procedures to be drawn up by the Secretary-General, in consultation with the competent specialized agencies, the regional organizations and Member States, to assist El Salvador, within the framework of the Peace Accords, during the period following the completion of ONUSAL's mandate.

We urge the parties to do what they have repeatedly stated they would do: step up their actions to fully resolve such delicate problems as those relating to the reform of the judicial and electoral systems, questions of security, programmes of land transfer and re-integration of ex-combatants and the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission on the Truth, in order to achieve full reconciliation in that country.

We firmly believe that progress in the political and institutional areas can be made only if it is accompanied by similar progress in the economic development of the region, and only if there is firm support for rebuilding the social fabric of those nations. The Central American countries also have before them the urgent task of rebuilding their economies and re-establishing and consolidating their political and legal institutions, which are the foundation of life in society.

By the same token, we attach great importance to the international community's support for the Government of Nicaragua in the economic and social rehabilitation and reconstruction of the country. Mexico participates in the Support Group that was created to assist Nicaragua in overcoming the destruction caused by long years of conflict, and we will continue our efforts in bilateral cooperation and our support through the multilateral mechanisms established for that purpose.

The support which the international community has been giving to Central America in its quest for reconciliation and lasting peace should not stop now that the States of the region have taken definite steps towards that end. The region needs financial resources and technical support to rebuild its economies. Without development, peace will always be precarious. The recent summit meeting in Guácimo underscores the positive spirit with which Central Americans want to build their future.

In this context, we believe that the cooperation of the United Nations system is of the utmost importance. We await with interest the updated programme mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, to be prepared in compliance with resolution 48/161. In this programme, in accordance with the Secretary-General's report, the emphasis must be shifted from an emergency programme to a strategy for sustainable human development in order to consolidate peace and eradicate the extreme poverty in the region.

Mexico wishes to reiterate its commitment to contribute to the efforts of the peoples of Central America to achieve a definitive peace as well as development, in the best spirit and in those areas to be decided upon by Central Americans themselves.

Mr. Howley (United States of America): The United States is pleased to be a sponsor of draft resolution A/49/L.35. One need not have a very long memory to recall when discussions of draft resolutions on Central America in this body were contentious. That this is no longer the case reflects the extraordinarily positive developments and trends in the region itself.

Central America is democratic: all its Governments came to office through constitutionally mandated processes. Within the past year every country has held free and fair elections, either at the national or at the regional level.

With the single exception of Guatemala, where we trust there will soon be a comprehensive agreement putting an end to its internal conflict, Central America is at peace, each nation with itself and with its neighbours. The degree of national reconciliation achieved by Nicaragua and El Salvador provides hope to all societies in conflict.

We have also been encouraged to see how the Central Americans have increasingly welcomed Belize as an observer and participant in their conferences and gatherings, such as the recent meeting on environmental issues in Managua and the conference on peace and development in Tegucigalpa.

As a result of its economic reforms, Central America is growing and developing. In 1994 every single economy in Central America registered positive growth and, according to the Inter-American Development Bank, the region as a whole will grow by nearly 5 per cent.

The process of Central American political cooperation and economic integration re-initiated at Esquipulas in 1987 continues to gather momentum and to expand into new areas of endeavour.

In October, for example, and with Vice President Al Gore of the United States observing, the Central American Presidents established the Central American Alliance for Sustainable Development. This is a new model of development, one that seeks to expand the benefits of growth to all the citizens of Central America and to protect for future generations the natural-resource base which is vital to all development.

My Government intends to cooperate with and support this new Alliance. In Miami, at the summit of the Americas next month, we hope to sign a statement of United States cooperation with the Central American Alliance.

Because we recognize that trade and private investment will provide a major impetus for future growth and development, my Government has developed legislation for an interim trade programme, which will be submitted to the United States Congress early in 1995. This programme will extend to Caribbean Basin Initiative countries access to the United States market, similar to that under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), in the areas of apparel and textiles.

As detailed in this draft resolution, Central America has taken charge of its future — a democratic, peaceful and increasingly prosperous future. The United States takes heart in these developments, is pleased to be a sponsor of this draft resolution, and urges its adoption by this body.

Mr. Biørn Lian (Norway): Since 1987 the General Assembly has been carefully following the situation in Central America and has commended the efforts of the peoples and Governments of the region to establish and consolidate peace. At the same time, the General Assembly has urged the countries in Central America to continue their efforts to achieve a firm and lasting peace. The Nordic countries have participated actively in this peace process.

The situation in Central America shows encouraging signs of improvement. Years of conflict and mistrust have given way to constructive cooperation, and democratic elections have become the rule rather than the exception. But there is still room for progress. In one of the countries there is still an armed conflict, and in the region as a whole there is still a need for further social and economic reforms, greater efforts in the fields of education and health, and a stronger consciousness of national solidarity and reconciliation.

Together with the other members of the Group of Friends and with active support from the other Nordic countries, Norway has been actively encouraging the peace process in Guatemala in the last few years. There is every reason to congratulate Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding and the Moderator, Mr. Jean Arnault, on the determined leadership shown by the United Nations in the negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG). The United Nations brought a new dynamic element into the peace process. Although negotiations are at present somewhat behind the schedule established in Mexico in March, important agreements have already been signed, and progress has been made in the current negotiations on the identity and the rights of the indigenous peoples in Guatemala.

The establishment and deployment of a human rights verification mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) is a significant step forward in the peace process. Nordic personnel participate in this mission. A United Nations presence of that nature gives renewed hope to the civilian sectors in Guatemala that peace, reconstruction and national reconciliation may soon become realities.

The Nordic countries feel a special commitment to the peace process in Guatemala. It was in Oslo that an agreement was reached in March 1990 which laid the foundations for the negotiations between the Government and the URNG. The round of negotiations in Oslo in June this year resulted in significant agreements on the issues of the resettlement of displaced persons and the establishment of a commission for the clarification of violations of human rights. Active and constructive diplomacy contributed greatly to the success of the negotiations.

The Nordic countries have been actively engaged in promoting assistance to Guatemala. Norway and Sweden have considerably stepped up their assistance to Guatemala during 1994, each reaching a level of $10 million. Special priority is being given to projects related to democratization and political development and to specially vulnerable groups, with particular emphasis on the indigenous population. Finland has played a significant role in the efforts toward assisting the many returnees in the country. The Nordic countries will also be prepared to contribute further to concrete peace-related needs which may arise during the negotiating process; and recognize the special role assigned to the United Nations system in this regard.

The people of Guatemala are impatient to see progress in the negotiating process. In order to change Guatemala into a more just, prosperous and democratic society, great efforts and the will to compromise will be required from all Guatemalans. If the democratic institutions of Guatemala do not reflect the aspirations of the Guatemalan people today, it is a challenge to the civilian sectors to make those institutions more

representative through broader participation in elections and confidence-building between the various sectors. But more has to be done by the Government and the armed forces to protect and promote human rights. The Nordic countries remain greatly concerned by recent brutal attacks against trade union leaders, human rights advocates and other civilians.

If the Guatemalans themselves are determined to show the way in the pacification, reconciliation and reconstruction of their nation, the Group of Friends and the rest of the international community will certainly be prepared to show solidarity and provide assistance. The civilian sectors and, indeed, all the people of Guatemala must understand that the United Nations and the Group of Friends are their firmest allies. If they work constructively together, it is possible to have peace and prosperity in Guatemala — and not only Guatemala but the whole of Central America depends on this.

The Nordic countries are pleased that they have been able to support a great number of initiatives in aid of the peace process, including the Truth Commission and the Human Rights Ombudsman. Also, Nordic countries have participated in the training of the new National Police Force and are considering the extension of this support, as well as other peace-building initiatives, into 1995.

The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) is widely accepted as an example of the new kind of peace-keeping operation, where both military and civilian post-conflict peace-building are integrated. Moreover, ONUSAL has an innovative aspect in the way it is supervising the human rights situation, and provides us with new experience which may prove useful in other conflict areas, such as in neighbouring Guatemala.

The general elections in March and April this year represent important steps towards a consolidation of the peace process and of democracy in El Salvador. The elections were widely regarded as fair and clean, although further reforms of the electoral system are required.

We strongly support the recent decision to extend the mandate of ONUSAL until 30 April 1995. But, at the same time, we urge the Government, as well as the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), to implement the still-outstanding points of the peace agreement, including the very important question of distribution of land and the necessary legal and electoral reforms, and respect for human rights. The election of a new Supreme Court in July was an encouraging step in the right direction.

The Nordic countries welcome the agreement reached in October this year between the Government and the FMLN regarding a new timetable for the implementation of the peace agreement. The willingness of all political forces to observe the laws scrupulously, combined with continued economic growth, represents the best basis for peaceful and prosperous development in El Salvador.

The political process in Nicaragua is still in need of a greater national consensus, but the institutions now function better and some progress has been made with regard to constitutional and other vital reforms. Substantial Swedish support was given to the local elections in the Atlantic regions in February. The way in which they were carried through represented an encouraging step forward. Endeavours should be made to create a more stable basis for constructive talks between the President and all major political parties and factions.

Only through political dialogue will it be possible to address the serious social and economic problems facing Nicaragua. The Group of Friends, in which Sweden is an active partner, seeks to provide support in addressing these and other difficult and crucial efforts. All parties must be prepared to make compromises for the good of the nation. The present situation, together with actions of armed groups and increased violence, is causing hardship and disillusionment within the population.

The Nordic countries welcome the Enhanced Structural Adjustment Fund agreement with the International Monetary Fund, signed in May, which we hope will contribute to strengthening the basis of Nicaraguan economic policy. However, the situation calls for continued efforts by the international community in order to support a sustainable and healthy economic development in the country. Stable economic growth for the benefit of the people can be achieved only under conditions of political stability, and this is the shared responsibility of all the political forces of Nicaragua. Such conditions are a prerequisite for long-term investments and lasting trade relations. In such circumstances, it is also possible to make more efficient use of development assistance.

Nicaragua is a major recipient of Nordic development assistance. We are prepared to continue this assistance in order to strengthen the efforts to secure

peace and national reconciliation as well as economic and social development. It must be stressed, however, that development assistance in itself is not sufficient to secure improved living conditions in the long run.

Only steady progress in democracy and constructive dialogue between the political parties can create a solid basis and a positive atmosphere for meaningful action in the economic area and lay the foundation for economic growth. The heavy debt burden on Nicaragua is one of the biggest obstacles to development in that country. Consolidation of the loans and at least partial debt relief would be of great benefit for sustainable development. The Nordic countries are prepared to join the donor community in this respect by supporting the process that aims at lessening the debt burden of Nicaragua.

Due to budgetary constraints, the Government should pursue very strict expenditure management practices, further refine the criteria for the priority development programmes and formulate clear sectoral policies. This, we feel, would lay a basis for improved aid management and coordination of external aid interventions. Even though there are some good signs of progress in this respect, there is a need to see a track record of results in the implementation of planned reforms. Strict adherence to the principles of good governance is a precondition for the confidence of development and trade partners.

It is encouraging to observe the recent political developments in Honduras. We fully support the initiatives of President Reina to reduce corruption and to improve the human rights situation. We also appreciate the efforts to reduce military expenditure and reallocate public expenditure to social sectors.

Since the end of 1993, Central America has demonstrated its interest in strengthening and consolidating political institutions by peaceful and democratic means. The elections held in five countries of the region have provided examples of this. These efforts have enjoyed the active collaboration of the international community through several channels of cooperation, including the United Nations itself.

The Nordic countries hope that the political will shown by the Central American countries will in due course produce a firm and lasting peace in the region. The Nordic countries are ready to continue to play an active role in the process of establishing a firm and lasting peace in Central America.

Mr. Pava (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): A number of factors have combined to produce peaceful political solutions in Central America, with peace agreements being reached in El Salvador and Nicaragua and considerable progress being made in Guatemala. They are: the international community's continuing attention; active intervention by the United Nations; the mobilization of the Central American countries in search of peace since the signing of the Esquipulas Agreements; the constant efforts of a group of countries, including Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia, that had participated with other countries in support groups, such as the Contadora Group and, more recently, in the "Group of Friends"; and, of course, the desire for peace on the part of all sections of Central American society.

It is interesting to look back and see the unforeseeable changes that have taken place over the past decade in the Central American isthmus.

In 1983, when the work of the Contadora Group began, the situation in Central America was particularly difficult. Most countries were wracked by violence, and it was widely feared that the tensions between neighbouring countries would lead to armed conflict. Grave violations of human rights were being committed, and subregional integration, which had been exemplary, was coming undone.

The economic situation was no better. Growth rates and the income of the region's inhabitants had reverted to the levels of 10 and 20 years earlier. Even worse, the dialogue between political leaders had broken down.

The inter-American system was unable to meet the challenge, so the idea arose of filling the political vacuum with a strictly Latin American effort to restore dialogue and negotiations.

The basic philosophy of Contadora was that decisions on solving problems should be reached solely by the countries concerned, exercising their sovereignty, without outside interference. Contadora acted as a mediator in the talks.

Results were not long in coming, with a far-ranging draft treaty resolving practically all outstanding questions. It included commitments on political issues and issues of national reconciliation; human rights; electoral processes; security; military manoeuvres; weapons and military personnel; support for irregular forces; terrorism; subversion; and sabotage; as well as commitments on

economic and social matters. All of this was agreed in order to reactivate and restructure the integration process.

The Contadora Final Act was ambitious for its time, certainly, but it led to the Esquipulas effort, which ended very satisfactorily by opening up bright prospects for a region that had suffered through internal conflicts. Similarly, it deepened the commitment to a representative elective democracy, with options, which still exists today, practised by the countries of the region in a manner that, happily, appears irreversible.

The international community's Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America, adopted by consensus in the General Assembly, is based on the hypothesis that peace is not the mere absence of war, but that it requires economic support and sustainable human development. The Plan was implemented for the five years from 1989 to 1994, when many of Central America's problems moved towards a solution; the process was bolstered by the political determination of the region's Presidents, who decided to meet periodically and take responsibility for guiding the processes of peace, integration and development. Such a thing had never happened in more than 150 years.

During the same period, there was progress towards democratization in Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador, and democratization was consolidated in Honduras; in another process, democracy was making progress in Panama as well. This was not easy; and as many conflicts began to revive, it was clearly time for each country to confront the root causes of war and violence.

Nicaragua, where internal fighting was probably the most intense, has been recovering gradually.

El Salvador was a magnificent example for the world, and is certainly the most successful of all United Nations peace efforts. There, as in the rest of the region, one element expedited solutions: the new international climate.

Twenty-eight months of intense negotiations between the Cristiani Government and the Frente Farabundo Mártí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) under the auspices of the Secretary-General, led to the San José agreement on respect for human rights and for international humanitarian law, with provision for international verification machinery. Agreement also emerged on other matters of great importance, including institutional reform, the new military doctrine, the establishment of a civilian police force, the prosecutor's office, and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, in addition to other major reforms in the judicial system, beginning with the Supreme Court. Moreover, there was agreement on the functioning of the ad hoc Commission and the Commission on the Truth. This led to arrangements for a cease-fire, the concentration of combatants, the surrender of weapons and the return to civilian life, all under the auspices of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

The results could not have been better. Since the cease-fire was proclaimed, not a single shot has been fired in the war. Institutions have been cleansed; the constitution has been reformed; the democratic rights of assembly and freedom of speech and opinion are in force; two elections have taken place in peace, and without interference the people has chosen its President and elected its legislative assembly.

Nor has the peace dividend been long in coming. The country, which had been regressing, grew this year at a rate higher than 5 per cent. Private internal and external investment returned. In other words, everyone has gained from peace.

But Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda show that peace is not made by international organizations. It is made by peoples. And no two countries are alike, so there is no one formula that can apply to similar situations. Each country must seek its own future. Still, the experience of others can serve as an example; it can point the way and help formulate solutions.

I am firmly convinced that, after so many years, conditions in Guatemala are ripe for peace. The parties to the conflict have sat down at the negotiating table with the healthy intention of putting an end to the devastating war.

To be sure, success will be possible only with the commitment of the entire international community to act together to defend democracy throughout the region. But there is growing recognition that what has been accomplished so far — though historic — is merely peace in the sense of a lack of armed confrontation. We have not removed all threats to coexistence, respect for the rule of law and the free exercise of civil rights. These threats to coexistence and democracy come not only from a past that is still with us — marked by human-rights violations, crime unpunished and many other factors — but also from institutional weakness and political fragility and a lack of representativity and legitimacy. This means

that some countries are in constant danger of constitutional and political instability.

The main threat to social and political stability lies in the appalling poverty and poor living standards of the majority of Central Americans. Efforts by the countries themselves to implement social policies designed to improve standards of living should be high on the agenda of the international community, which should address this issue through development assistance and assistance to the external trade on which the countries of the region must base their economic growth.

Economically, the countries of Central America are small countries whose growth depends on exports, mainly of agricultural products, to a small number of markets. Economic integration among Central American countries and access to new economic blocks such as the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Group of 3 and, of course, the European Union are necessary for sustainable social and economic development. The best way to assist these countries in attaining social stability is by helping with the development of trade.

The establishment of a firm and lasting peace has three components. The first is the end to armed conflict and compliance with agreements under the supervision of the international community. The second is consolidation of the process of democratization and the rebuilding of institutions; here the international community must pay close attention, especially to respect for human rights and to strengthening institutions related to the promotion and monitoring of human rights. The third and final component is fighting poverty and inequality. Here we must not only expand development and trade assistance, but must also remain vigilant with respect to the management of resources, especially those related to fulfilment of the social and economic pledges deriving from peace agreements.

Finally, we must strive to ensure that the year 2000 marks the end of the history of war and death as the basis of relations between countries and men, with its replacement by history of peace, life, tolerance, understanding and shared progress, in a spirit of democracy and respect for human rights in all their dimensions, civil, political, economic, social and collective, so that we can also declare peace to the world.

Mr. Owada (Japan): In recent years remarkable progress has been made in the Central American peace process. Most noteworthy, perhaps, is the consolidation of peace and stability in El Salvador through the general election held last March, the first since the termination of the conflict.

The experience in El Salvador holds particular significance for this Organization. The coordination of United Nations efforts with the initiatives of like-minded countries has demonstrated new ways in which peace-keeping and peace-building may be effectively combined, and has provided a model for future endeavours. I should like to take this opportunity to pay high tribute to the innovative activities of the United Nations organs and agencies in El Salvador. The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), in particular, has played a central and indispensable role throughout the process of negotiating the peace accords, and is currently engaged in efforts to promote respect for human rights, to reform the judiciary and to address essential socio-economic issues.

The general election held in El Salvador last March was the culmination of patient and protracted efforts by all the parties concerned. That the election was successful and held in a manner deemed to be free and fair is testimony to the commitment of the people of El Salvador to the democratic process and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The Japanese electoral observers who were sent to El Salvador were especially impressed by the high expectations of its people for a better future. At the same time, we must bear in mind that decades of conflict and distrust cannot be forgotten overnight; delays in the implementation of the peace accords are a source of deep concern.

As the Secretary-General noted in his report, the United Nations continues to be engaged in El Salvador, turning its attention from peace-keeping to post-conflict peace-building. El Salvador must continue to receive support from the international community, in order that its peace-related programmes — which are vital to national reconciliation, democratization and prosperity — may be truly effective. It is Japan's hope that the people of El Salvador will prove to the international community through its attainment of peace and prosperity that the concept of peace-building is in fact viable.

The vigilant attention and consistent efforts of the international community are required elsewhere in the region as well. I should like in particular to touch upon the situation in Guatemala, where efforts are being made to bring an end to the longest conflict in Central America.

The negotiations between the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaria Nacional Guatemalteca have proceeded somewhat fitfully, resulting in serious delays in the timetable for the peace process. After a period of suspension, the talks were resumed last January and, with Mr. Jean Arnault presiding as moderator, they succeeded in finalizing several agreements, including one on the negotiations for a firm and lasting peace. Then, in June, the talks were suspended for another four-month period. In September, the General Assembly established the United Nations Mission for the Verification of Human Rights and of Compliance with the Commitments of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights in Guatemala which opened its office in Guatemala just one week ago. Japan pays high tribute to the United Nations, particularly that Mission, and also to the member countries of the Group of Friends, especially the Governments of Mexico and Norway, for their efforts to advance the peace process. We earnestly hope that the parties will continue to engage in dialogue with the aim of signing a comprehensive peace agreement by the end of this year, as originally scheduled.

Numerous obstacles remain on the path towards peace and democracy in Central America. But, rather than allowing ourselves to be discouraged, we must overcome these obstacles by combining peace-keeping and peace-building activities in new and creative ways.

It is in this context that Japan is extending various kinds of medium- and long-term cooperation — including yen loans, general grant aid and technical assistance — to the countries in the region. It has also responded promptly and generously to the need for emergency relief in the wake of natural disasters that have occurred in the region. Should any new emergency arise, Japan will stand ready to provide assistance as required. Japan hopes that its assistance will not only facilitate economic development and provide humanitarian relief, but also help advance the peace process and ensure that any progress made will become irreversible.

Let me conclude my brief intervention with a word of gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the invaluable role he has played in our endeavour to restore peace and stability throughout Central America. His efforts truly deserve our support and admiration. I should also like to encourage the General Assembly and the Security Council to follow developments in Central America closely, with a view to applying to them the concept of peace-building in its most innovative sense. It is my sincere hope that, through its experiences in the Central American region, the United Nations will further enhance its ability to pursue peace-keeping, peacemaking and peace-building activities in other parts of the world.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.